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SUBJECT: Relocation of National Tainan University further
Intensifies Mayoral Election in Tainan

Ref: TAIPEI 3916

1. Taiwan's Education Minister Tu Cheng-sheng on October 23 announced at the site of the National Tainan University's future campus in Chiku, Tainan County that the university's relocation project will be started in 2006 and completed in 2014 with NT\$5.7 billion from the Executive Yuan (EY). Minister Tu also disclosed an official letter with President Chen Shui-bian's comment, which urged the Executive Yuan to give full support to facilitate relocation of the university, assuring Tainan county residents that the university relocation will take place.

2. Tainan Mayor Hsu Tian-tsair, who is running for re-election, swore publicly that he would resign if the university was moved out of Tainan City. In response to the Minister's announcement, KMT Tainan mayoral candidate Chen Jung-sheng urged Hsu to resign to take political responsibility as well as to fulfill his own promise, which was made during an interpellation with City Councilor Chiang Chang-yuan on September 26. The KMT Candidate further criticized incumbent DPP Mayor Hsu Tian-tsair as incapable of securing one of the city's most valuable assets and its cultural and educational resources (see reftel).

3. Taiwan Solidarity Union mayoral candidate Chien Lin Hui-chun also criticized Mayor Hsu for failing to keep secure the metropolitan university. Chien Lin urged Mayor Hsu to seek support from all Tainan-elected legislators of different political parties to press the central government to keep the university in the city.

4. In response to criticism from the opposition, Tainan Mayor Hsu Tain-tsair said he did not oppose the relocation project since he regarded it as an expansion of the university campus. Hsu asserted that he would strive to preserve all the campus, excluding the dormitory area, and to best use the facilities of the university by integrating its educational resources with local industries.

5. The opposition has been watching closely the development of the university relocation issue. On September 20, KMT Tainan mayoral candidate Chen Jung-sheng, in conjunction with KMT and PFP city council caucuses, initiated a signature drive urging the Ministry of Education to change its policy of retrieving two thirds of the university campus's land in the city. Protesting the EY's confirmation of the policy, on October 27 KMT Legislator Wang Yi-ting from Tainan City, in conjunction with other KMT legislators in a legislative session, cut the first phase of the project's budget. Wang urged the Ministry of Education to seek alternatives to keep the presence of the university in Tainan City.

6. Local residents in Chiku Township expressed huge dissatisfaction over the boycott of the relocation budget by the Legislative Yuan. Learning that the boycott was originated by KMT legislators, KMT Tainan County Councilor Chou Si-hai pointed out that the issue is no longer an issue between political parties; rather it's an issue between the city and the county. DPP Tainan County Magistrate Su Huan-chih responded that he has no clue about the new development and will not map out solutions until he obtains more information on the Legislative Yuan resolution.

THIELE

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